



THORCAL

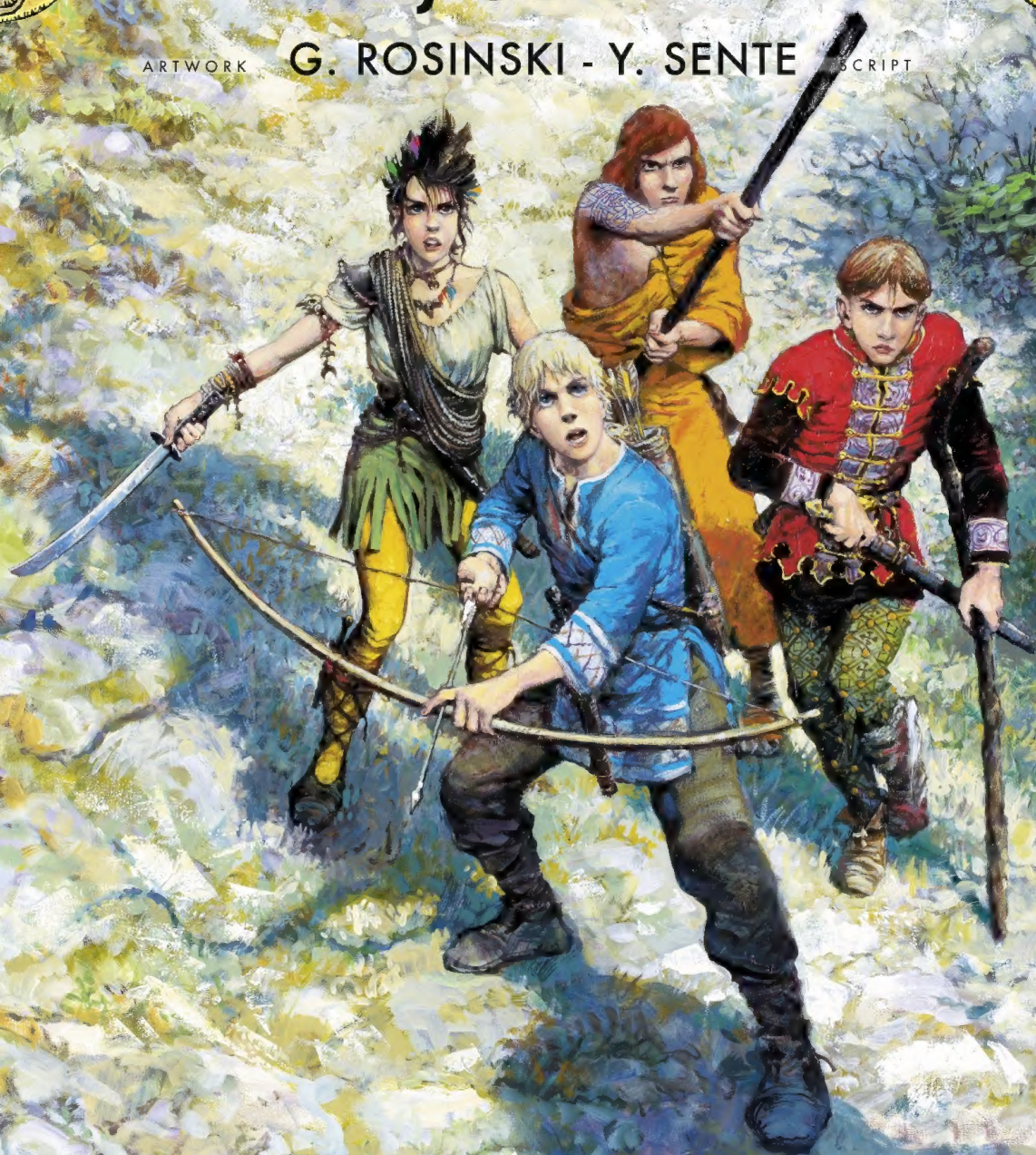
I, Jolan



ARTWORK

G. ROSINSKI - Y. SENTE

SCRIPT



Europe
COMICS

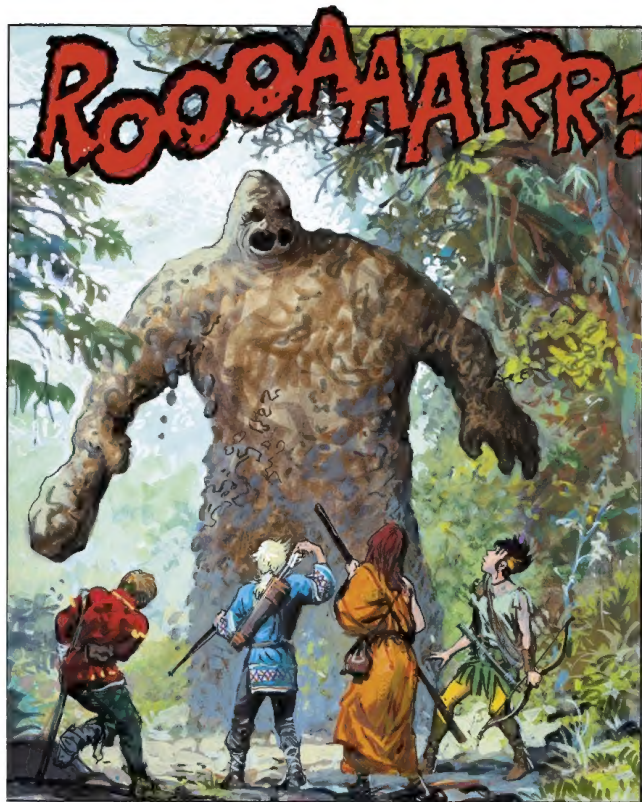
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SCRIPT

THORGAL

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The series *Thorgal* was created by writer Jean Van Hamme and artist Gregorz Rosinski.



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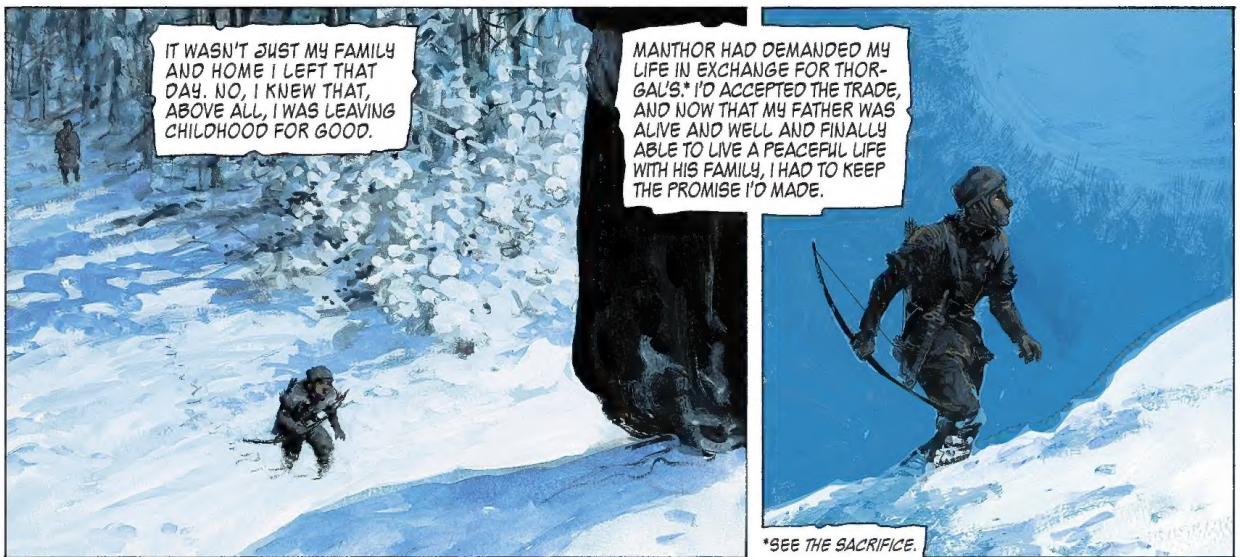
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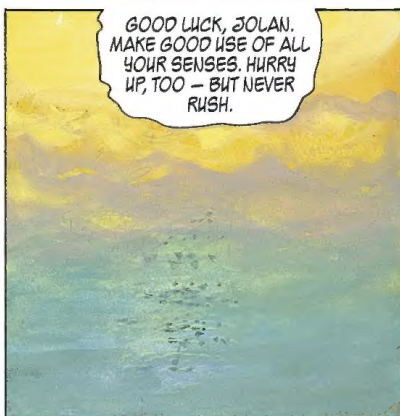
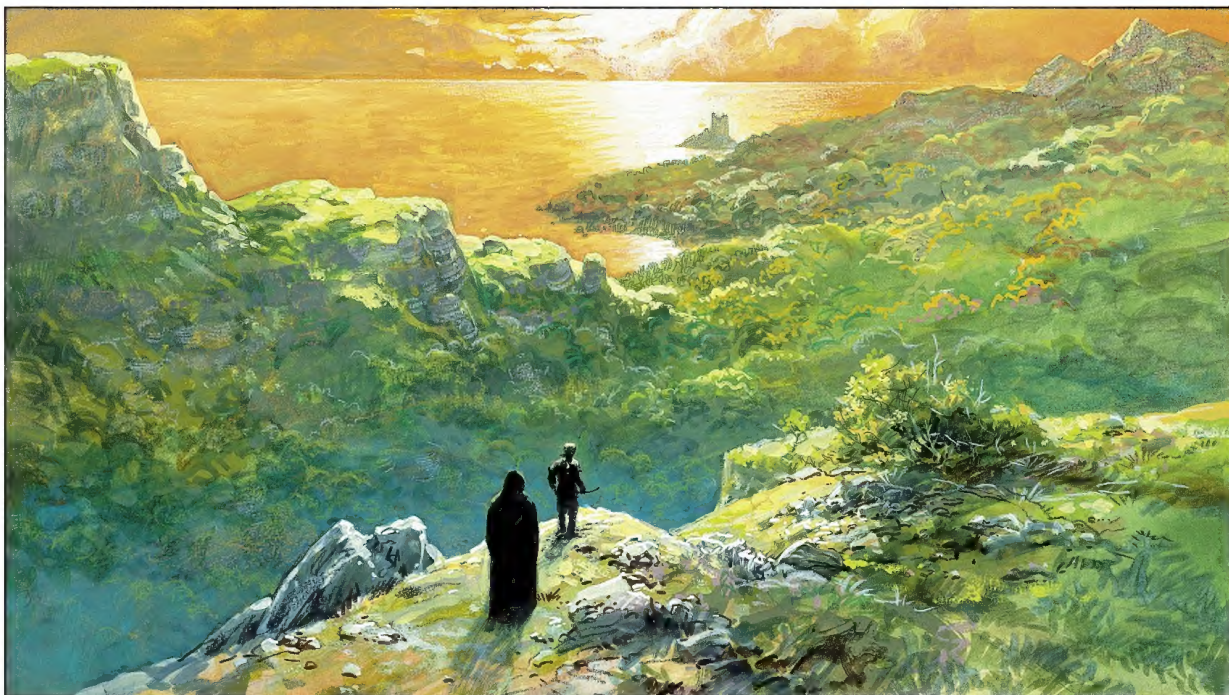


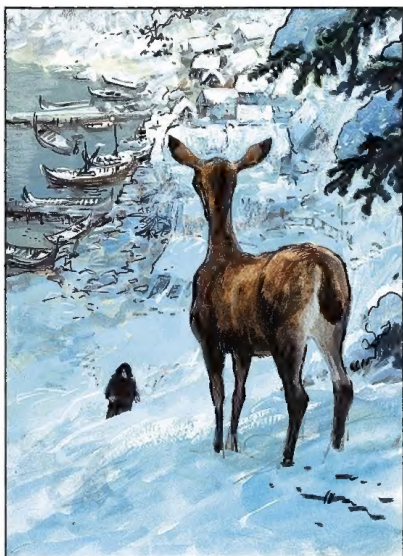
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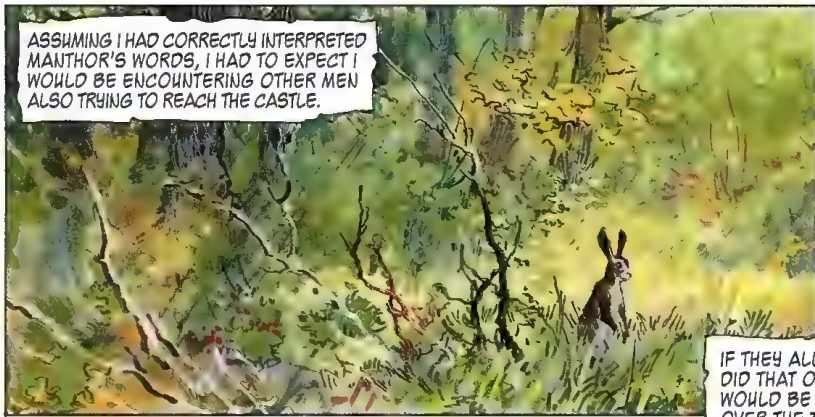












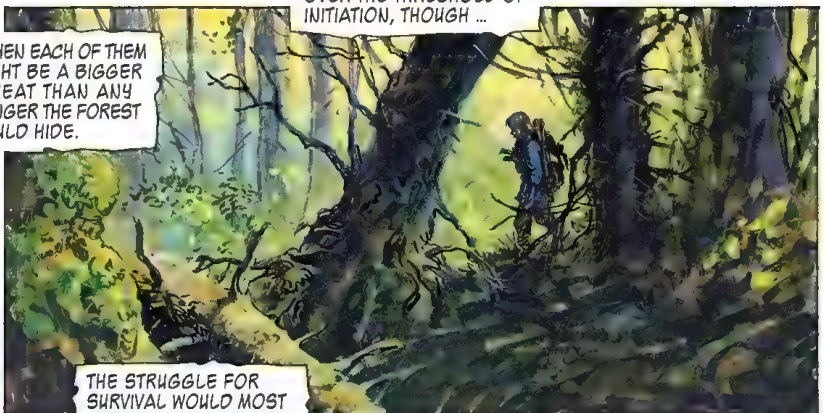
ASSUMING I HAD CORRECTLY INTERPRETED
MANTHOR'S WORDS, I HAD TO EXPECT I
WOULD BE ENCOUNTERING OTHER MEN
ALSO TRYING TO REACH THE CASTLE.



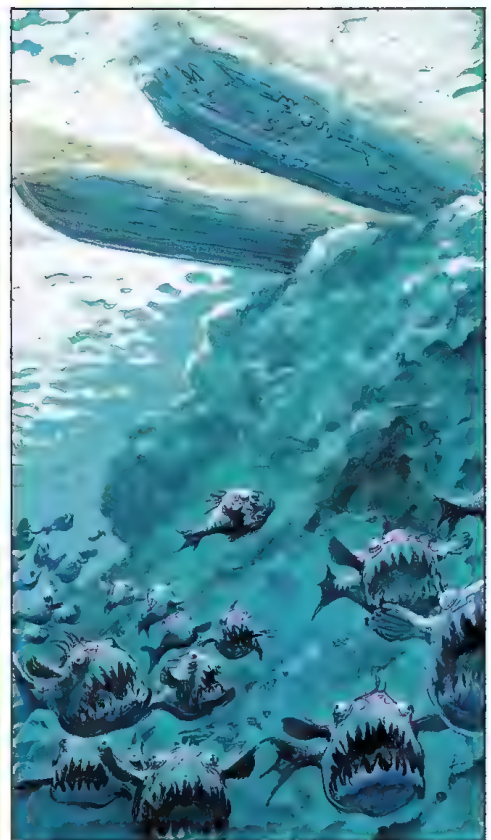
IF THEY ALL KNEW AS I
DID THAT ONLY TWO FEET
WOULD BE ABLE TO STEP
OVER THE THRESHOLD OF
INITIATION, THOUGH ...

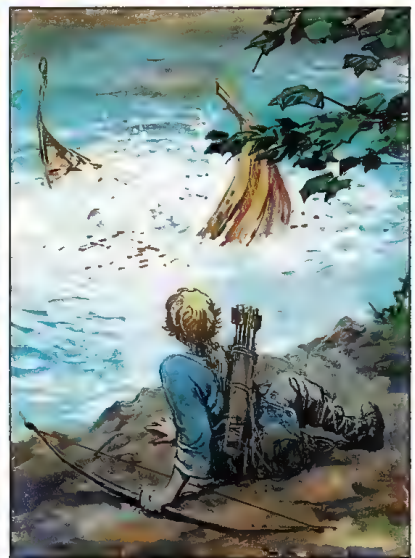
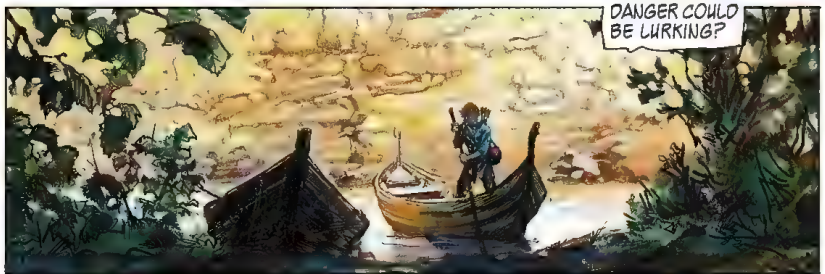
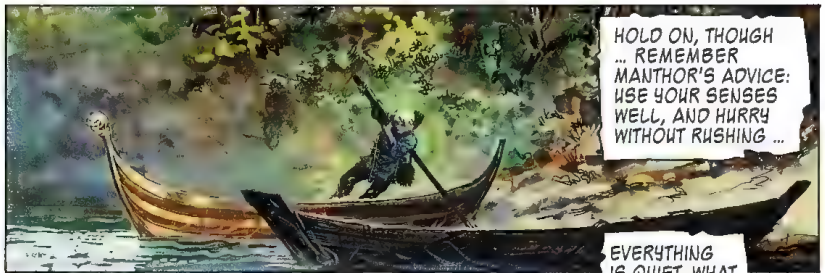


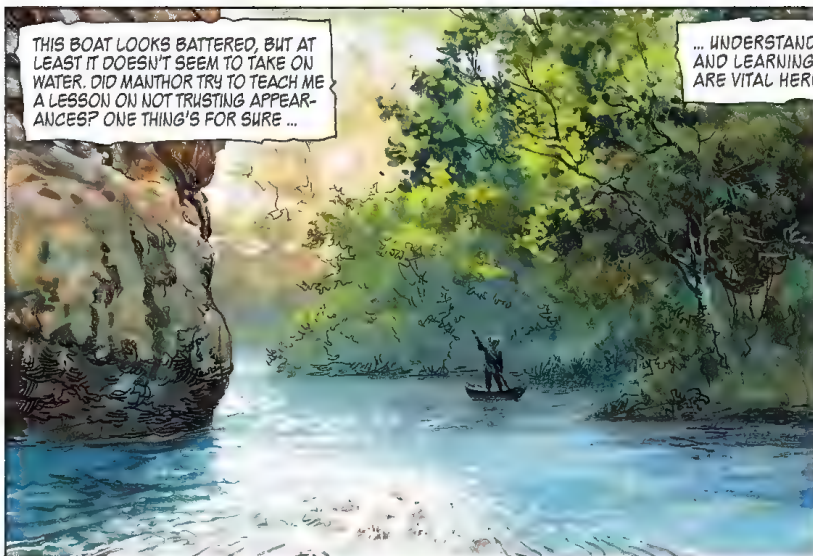
... THEN EACH OF THEM
MIGHT BE A BIGGER
THREAT THAN ANY
DANGER THE FOREST
COULD HIDE.



THE STRUGGLE FOR
SURVIVAL WOULD MOST
LIKELY NOT BE LIMITED TO
FORAGING FOR FOOD.







THIS BOAT LOOKS BATTERED, BUT AT LEAST IT DOESN'T SEEM TO TAKE ON WATER. DID MANTHOR TRY TO TEACH ME A LESSON ON NOT TRUSTING APPEARANCES? ONE THING'S FOR SURE ...

... UNDERSTANDING AND LEARNING FAST ARE VITAL HERE!



NO! NO!
I DON'T WANT TO
... STAY AWAY!
GAAAH!



YOU, OVER THERE!
HELP! COME
QUICKLY!
I'M SINKING, AND
THIS RIVER IS FULL
OF MONSTERS!
HURRY!



I'M COMING! TRY TO
MOVE AS LITTLE AS
POSSIBLE!

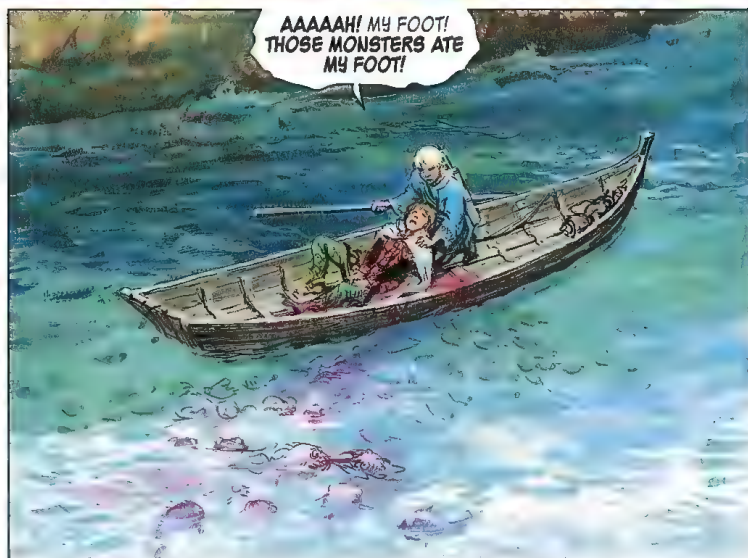


AAAH! I'M
SLIPPING!
HELP ME!



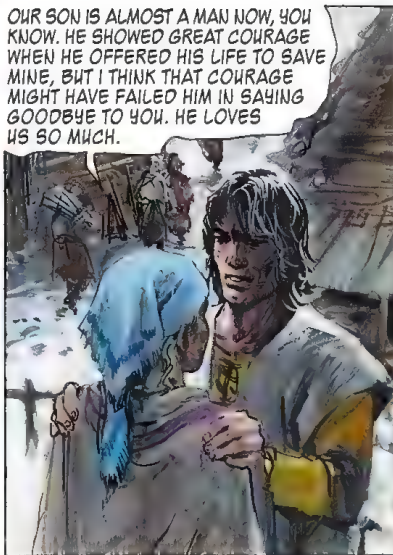
HOLD ON!
GRAB ON
TO ME!

AAAAAAH!



AAAAAH! MY FOOT!
THOSE MONSTERS ATE
MY FOOT!





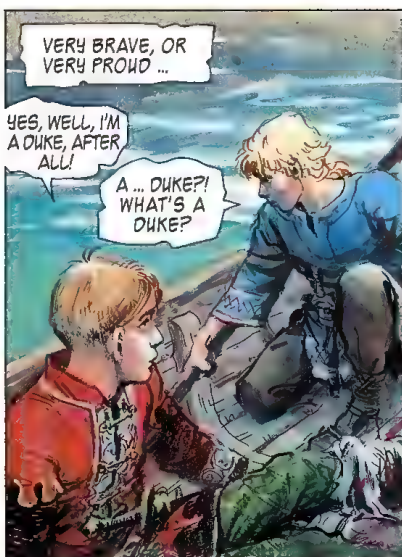


THE BOY I'D SAVED IN THE NICK OF TIME WAS CALLED ARLAC. HE CAME FROM SOME DISTANT LAND IN THE SOUTH.

HIS FOOT MUST HAVE HURT HORRIBLY, BUT HE DID HIS BEST NOT TO SHOW IT. HE MUST HAVE BEEN VERY BRAVE.



THERE. I DID WHAT I COULD TO STOP THE BLEEDING. I'M IMPRESSED BY HOW WELL YOU CAN WITHSTAND PAIN, YOU KNOW.



VERY BRAVE, OR VERY PROUD ...

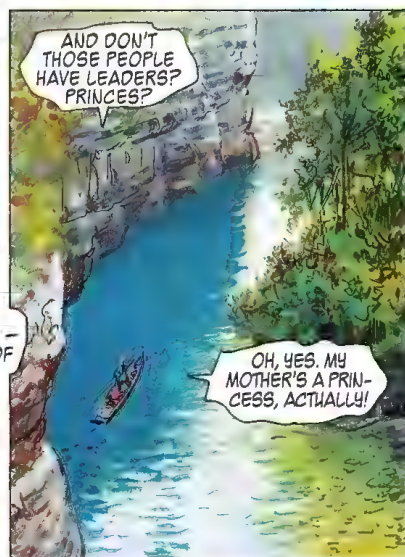
YES, WELL, I'M A DUKE, AFTER ALL!

A ... DUKE?! WHAT'S A DUKE?



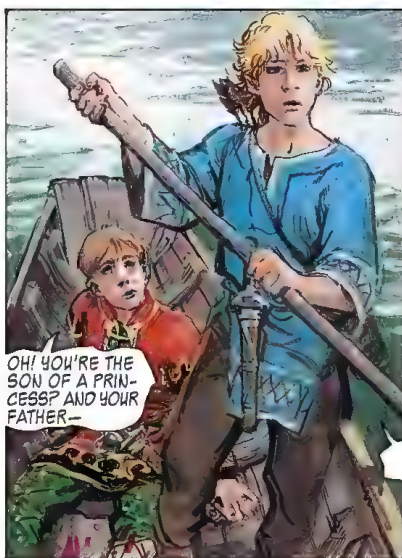
YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT A ... ? GOOD HEAVENS, WHAT SORT OF BARBARIC LAND ARE YOU FROM?

NORTHLAND - THE LAND OF VIKINGS!



AND DON'T THOSE PEOPLE HAVE LEADERS? PRINCES?

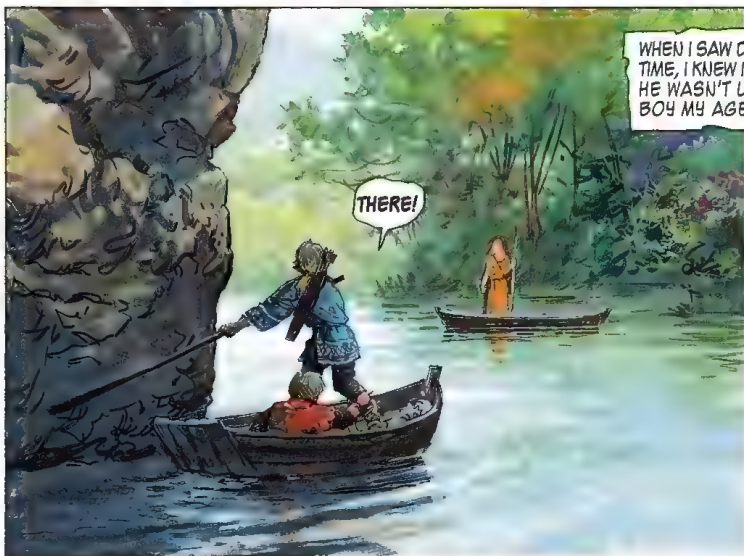
OH, YES. MY MOTHER'S A PRINCESS, ACTUALLY!



OH! YOU'RE THE SON OF A PRINCESS? AND YOUR FATHER—



LOOK!



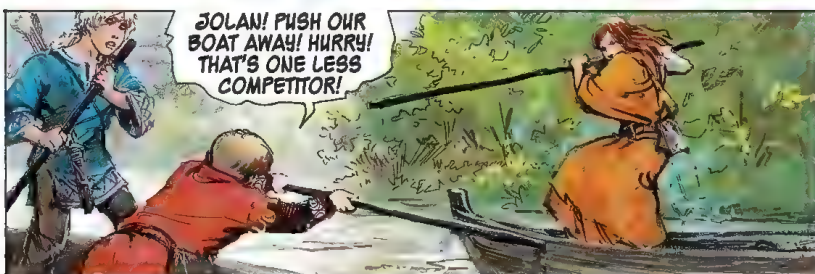
WHEN I SAW DRAY FOR THE FIRST TIME, I KNEW INSTINCTIVELY THAT HE WASN'T LIKE ANY OTHER BOY MY AGE.



BY WHAT MIRACLE IS YOUR BOAT STAYING STILL?



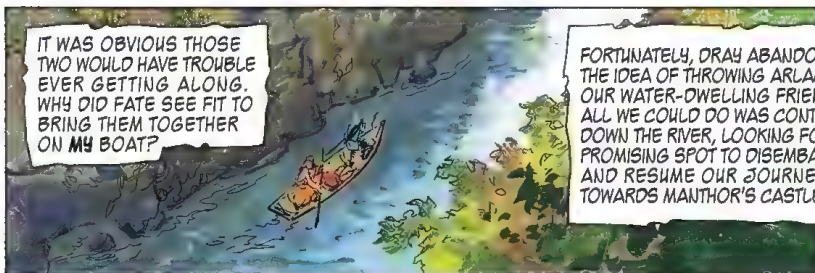
THE PROW IS STUCK IN A SAND-BANK. I CANNOT GET IT OUT WITHOUT SETTING FOOT IN THE RIVER TO PULL IT OUT - AND AS YOU MAY HAVE NOTICED, THAT WOULD BE A DANGEROUS PROPOSITION ...



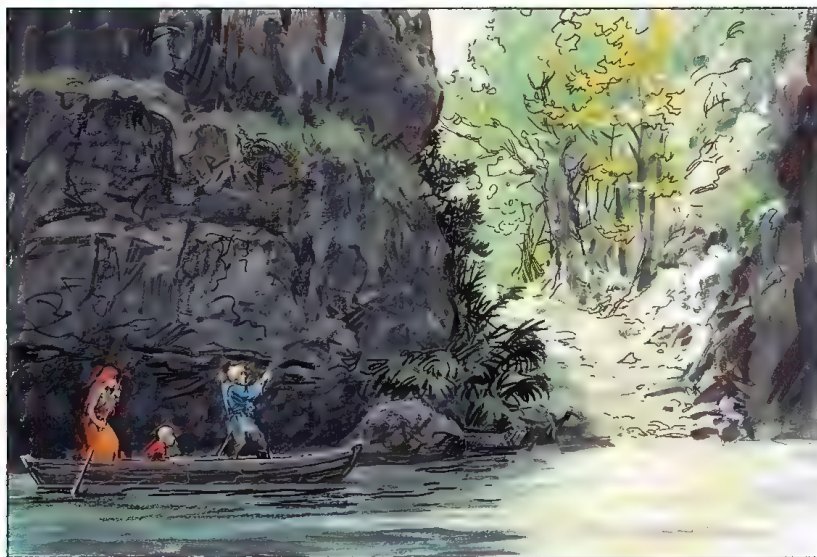
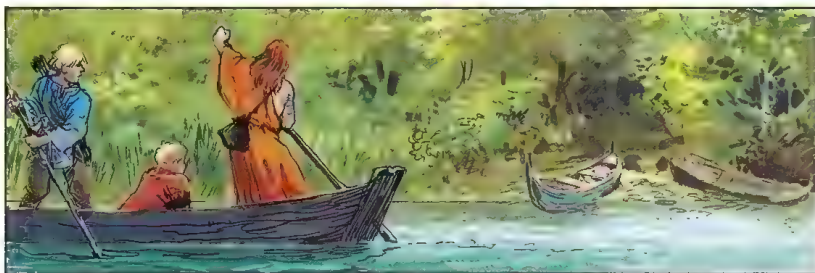
JOLAN! PUSH OUR BOAT AWAY! HURRY! THAT'S ONE LESS COMPETITOR!



SOME WELCOME! SUCH COURTESY FROM SOMEONE ... WHO LOOKS LIKE HE RECENTLY NEEDED HELP HIMSELF.



FORTUNATELY, DRAH ABANDONED THE IDEA OF THROWING ARLAC TO OUR WATER-DWELLING FRIENDS. ALL WE COULD DO WAS CONTINUE DOWN THE RIVER, LOOKING FOR A PROMISING SPOT TO DISEMBARK AND RESUME OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS MANTHOR'S CASTLE.





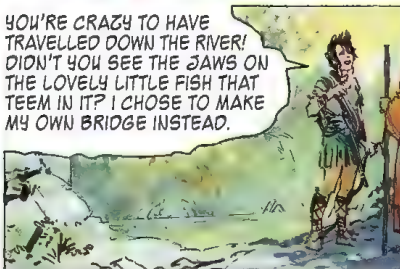
WHO ... WHO
ARE YOU? SHOW
YOURSELVES!



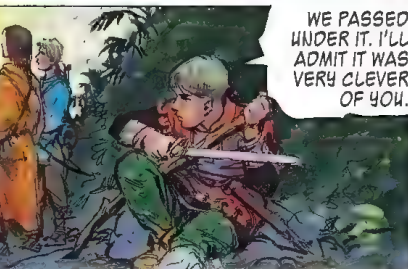
HA! HA! HA! THAT
TIMOROUS QUAVER
IN YOUR VOICE IS
IRRESISTIBLE, MY
HANDSOME CRIPPLE!



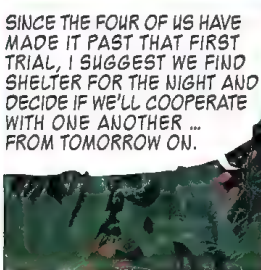
HAIL! I AM INGVID.
I GUESS YOU'RE THE
OTHER PRETENDERS
TO INITIATION.



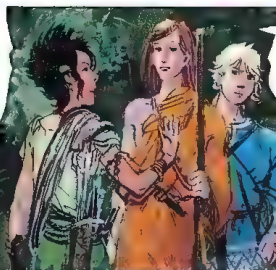
YOU'RE CRAZY TO HAVE
TRAVELLED DOWN THE RIVER!
DIDN'T YOU SEE THE JAWS ON
THE LOVELY LITTLE FISH THAT
TEEM IN IT? I CHOSE TO MAKE
MY OWN BRIDGE INSTEAD.



WE PASSED
UNDER IT. I'LL
ADMIT IT WAS
VERY CLEVER
OF YOU.



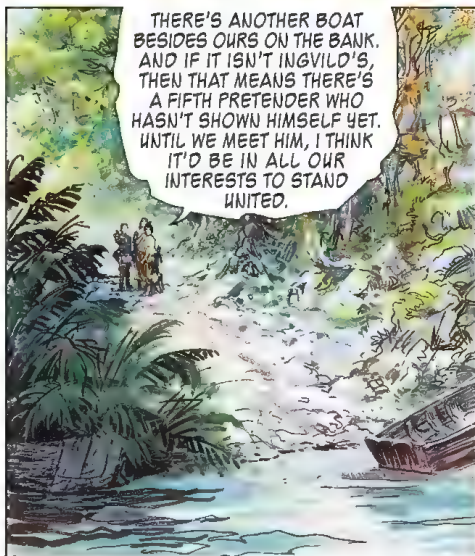
SINCE THE FOUR OF US HAVE
MADE IT PAST THAT FIRST
TRIAL, I SUGGEST WE FIND
SHELTER FOR THE NIGHT AND
DECIDE IF WE'LL COOPERATE
WITH ONE ANOTHER ...
FROM TOMORROW ON.



I THINK
THAT
WOULD
BE WISE.



WISE?! THAT
REMAINS TO BE
SEEN! I'LL TELL YOU
RIGHT NOW: I DON'T
TRUST ANY OF YOU.



THERE'S ANOTHER BOAT
BESIDES OURS ON THE BANK.
AND IF IT ISN'T INGVID'S,
THEN THAT MEANS THERE'S
A FIFTH PRETENDER WHO
HASN'T SHOWN HIMSELF YET.
UNTIL WE MEET HIM, I THINK
IT'D BE IN ALL OUR
INTERESTS TO STAND
UNITED.



ROOOAAAARRR!!!





SO, THERE WILL
BE TWO WOMEN
IN THE FAMILY,
NOW ...



I'M WORRIED
ABOUT JOLAN.

AARICIA, YOU TOLD WOLFCUB YOURSELF — AND QUITE WELL AT THAT: JOLAN IS ONLY GOING TO BE AWAY FROM US TEMPORARILY. ONE DAY, THANKS TO MANTHOR, IT WILL BE A MAN WHO RETURNS TO US. A MAN ABLE TO STAND ON HIS OWN TWO FEET AND OF WHOM WE WILL MOST CERTAINLY BE PROUD.



WHAT GIVES YOU SUCH
CONFIDENCE IN THIS MANTHOR,
THOUGH? ACCORDING TO VIGRID*,
HE'S HATED ALL GODS EVER SINCE
ODIN EXILED HIS MOTHER AND
SMOTE HIS FATHER. WHAT IF HE
BRINGS THEIR WRATH UPON
OUR SON'S HEAD?

*SEE VOLUME 21 THE SACRIFICE.

HAVE FAITH, MY BELOVED. DON'T FORGET THAT MANTHOR SAVED MY LIFE. WHY WOULD HE WANT TO HARM JOLAN? NO, CAST ASIDE THESE DARK THOUGHTS AND LET'S GO HOME TO OUR SOON-TO-BE-A-WOMAN DAUGHTER AND HER LITTLE BROTHER.

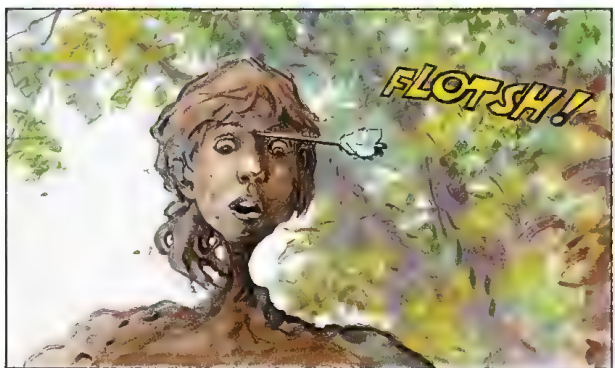
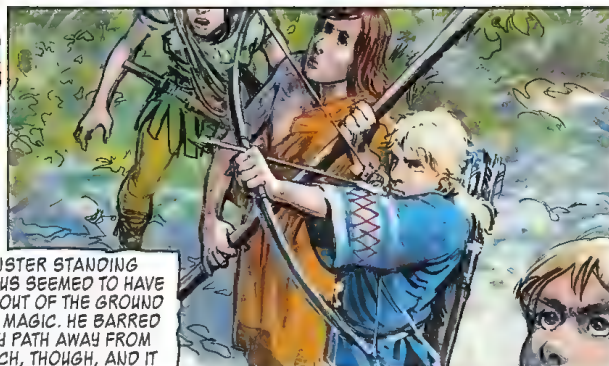


YOU'RE
PROBABLY
RIGHT ...





THE MONSTER STANDING BEFORE US SEEMED TO HAVE SPRUNG OUT OF THE GROUND AS IF BY MAGIC. HE BARRED THE ONLY PATH AWAY FROM THE BEACH, THOUGH, AND IT WAS CLEAR THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO FIGHT THROUGH.

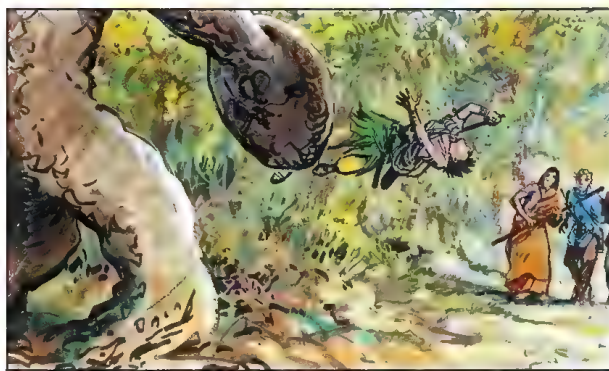


SINCE THERE'S NO OTHER CHOICE ...

... LET'S GET TO IT ALREADY!



INGVILD!
NO-O-O!

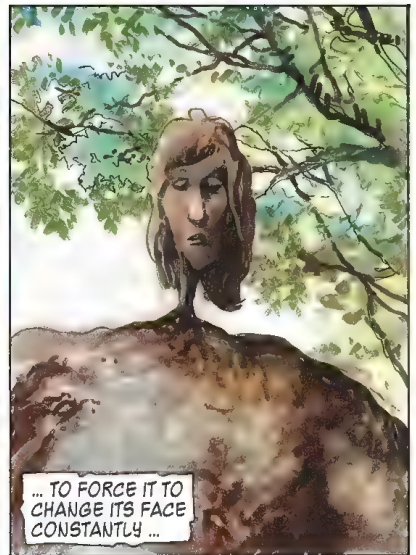




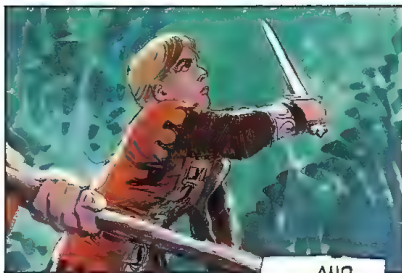
THE MOST IMPORTANT ASPECT WAS PROPERLY COORDINATING EVERYONE'S ACTIONS.



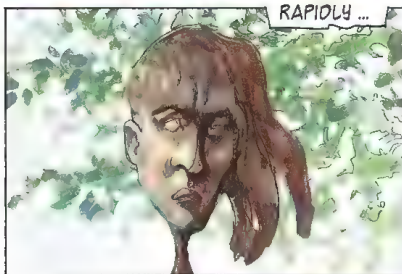
OUR TACTIC WAS ACTUALLY RATHER STRAIGHTFORWARD. WHILE THE BOYS DREW THE MONSTER'S ATTENTION ...



... TO FORCE IT TO CHANGE ITS FACE CONSTANTLY ...



... AND RAPIDLY ...



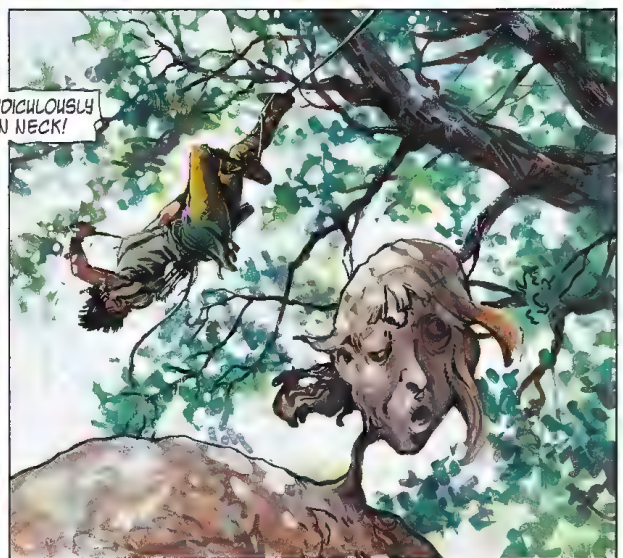
... INGVLID, WHO SEEMED AS SKILLED IN USING ROPES AS SHE WAS WITH HER BOW ...



... FLANKED THE THREAT ...



... TO STRIKE AT ITS WEAK SPOT ...



... ITS RIDICULOUSLY THIN NECK!



WHILE IT PROBABLY WASN'T THE BRAVEST OF ASSAULTS, WE COULD HAVE MOUNTED, IT CERTAINLY PROVED EFFECTIVE.



WELL DONE, INGILD!

A BLOW WELL STRUCK, INDEED!



HEY! LOOK AT THAT!

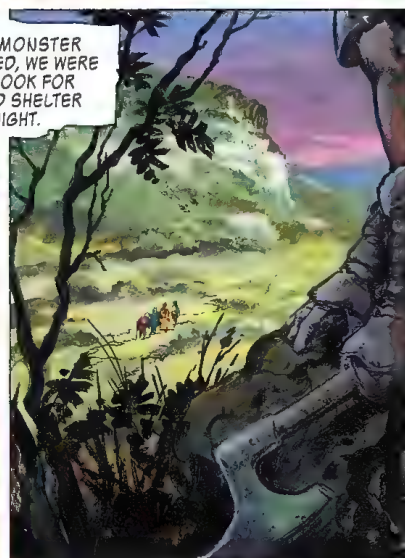
BLOB BLOUPOB BLOOPOUP



IT'S OVER. WE DEFEATED IT, TOGETHER.



TOGETHER? WE DIDN'T GET MUCH HELP FROM OUR FIFTH COMPANION ...



WITH THE MONSTER DESTROYED, WE WERE FREE TO LOOK FOR FOOD AND SHELTER FOR THE NIGHT.

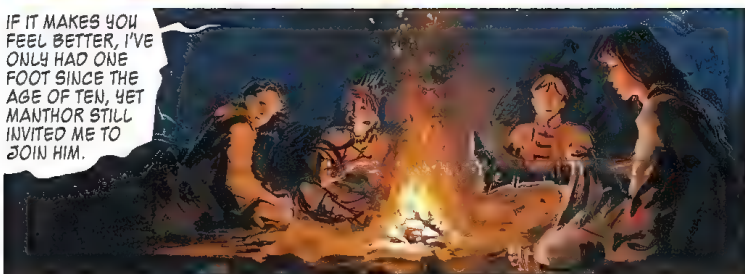


SO, IF I'VE GOT THIS RIGHT, EACH OF US WAS INVITED BY MANTHOR TO PREPARE FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY DESTINY ... PROVIDED WE REACH HIS CASTLE BEFORE THE SUN SETS TOMORROW.



WE WERE ALL CHOSEN, YET HE MADE IT CLEAR TO EACH OF US THAT ONLY TWO FEET COULD TREAD THE THRESHOLD OF INITIATION. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT THAT SOUNDS LIKE AN OPEN INVITATION TO KILL EACH OTHER.

DON'T FORGET THE MUD MONSTER, EITHER. NONE OF US COULD HAVE DEFEATED IT ALONE! IT WAS ONLY TOGETHER THAT WE WERE ABLE TO DEFEAT IT, AND I'M CONVINCED THAT WAS EXACTLY THE LESSON TO LEARN.



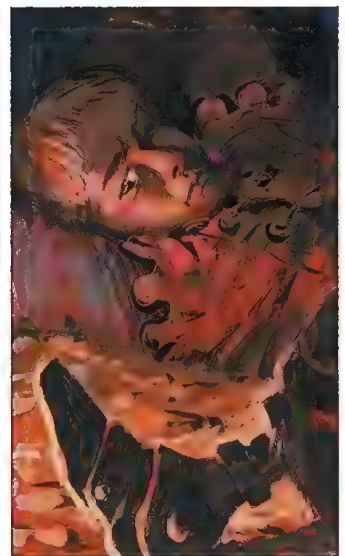
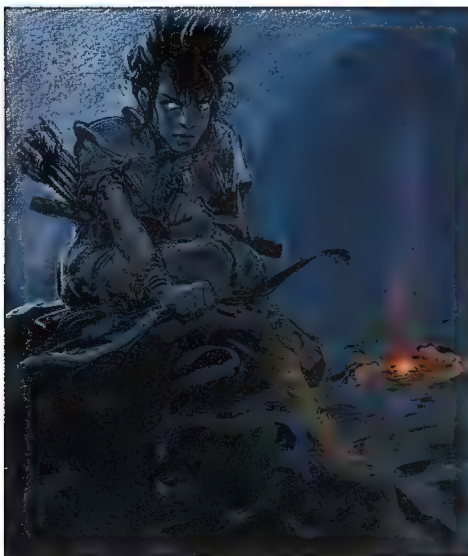
IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER, I'VE ONLY HAD ONE FOOT SINCE THE AGE OF TEN, YET MANTHOR STILL INVITED ME TO JOIN HIM.

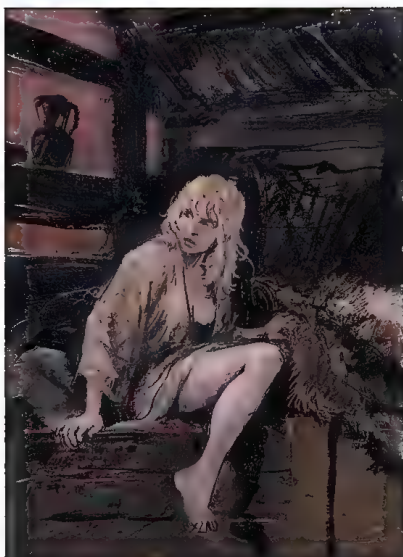


I AGREE. LET'S STICK TOGETHER. WE CAN ALWAYS FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO LATER ... IF WE REACH THAT CASTLE ALIVE.



YOU LOOK EXHAUSTED, BOYS! GET SOME SLEEP. I'LL TAKE FIRST WATCH.





SO, MY BELOVED, ARE YOU TRYING TO LEAVE WITHOUT SAYING GOODBYE TOO?

I'M SORRY, THORGAL, BUT I'M TOO WORRIED. YES, JOLAN MUST BECOME A MAN. I KNOW. BUT TO DO SO, HE MUST BE ALIVE. I WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS MANTHOR.

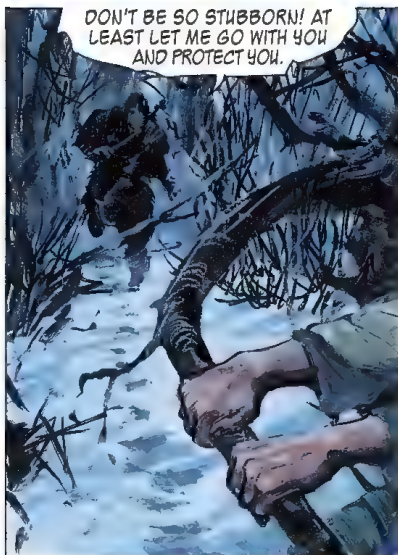
HOW DO YOU PLAN ON DOING THAT?

THE WOMEN OF THE VILLAGE HAVE TAKEN TO SECRETLY VISITING SOME SORT OF HEALER WHO MADE HER HOME IN THE FOREST WHILE WE WERE GONE. THEY SAY SHE CAN SEE THE PAST, AS WELL AS THE FUTURE ...

AARICIA, STOP! THIS IS CRAZY. YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHO THAT WOMAN IS, AND IN ANY CASE WE CANNOT GO TO THE BETWIXT. LISTEN ...

NO! ENOUGH. LEAVE ME BE!







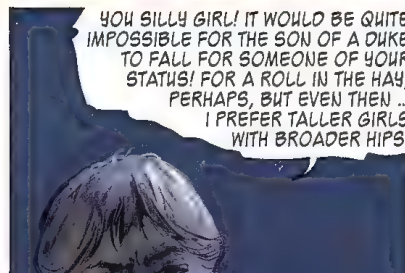
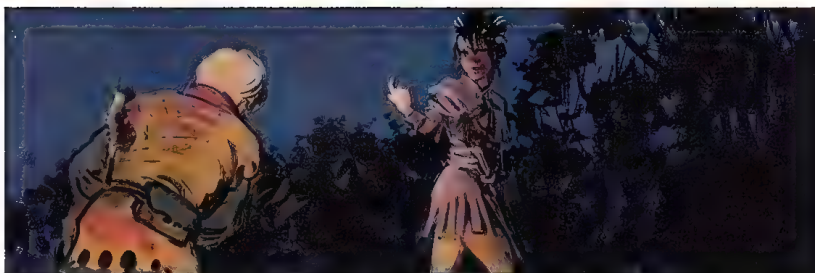
ARLAC ... WAKE UP.
I NEED TO TALK TO
YOU ...



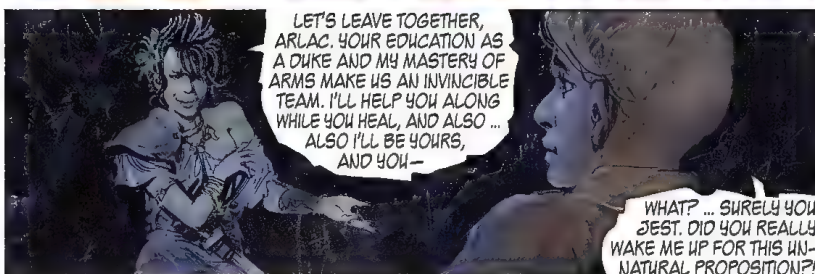
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE
NIGHT? CAN'T IT ... WAIT
UNTIL TOMORROW?



NO. COME WITH
ME QUIETLY. YOU
WON'T REGRET IT.



YOU SILLY GIRL! IT WOULD BE QUITE
IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE SON OF A DUKE
TO FALL FOR SOMEONE OF YOUR
STATUS! FOR A ROLL IN THE HAY,
PERHAPS, BUT EVEN THEN ...
I PREFER TALLER GIRLS
WITH BROADER HIPS.

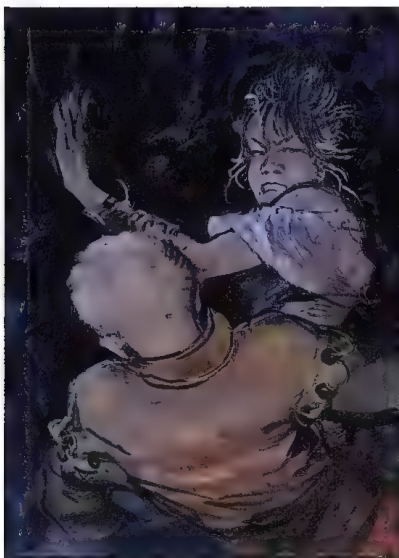


LET'S LEAVE TOGETHER,
ARLAC. YOUR EDUCATION AS
A DUKE AND MY MASTERY OF
ARMS MAKE US AN INVINCIBLE
TEAM. I'LL HELP YOU ALONG
WHILE YOU HEAL, AND ALSO ...
ALSO I'LL BE YOURS,
AND YOU—

WHAT? ... SURELY YOU
JEST. DID YOU REALLY
WAKE ME UP FOR THIS UN-
NATURAL PROPOSITION?!



WELL? HAVE
YOU LOST YOUR
TONGUE?



HA! HA! HA! POOR LITTLE
LAMB! YOU SHOULDN'T
PLAY IF YOU'RE NOT
PREPARED TO LOSE.
LOOKS LIKE IT WAS
A DAY FULL OF ALL
MANNER OF LESSONS
FOR YOU! HA! HA! HA!

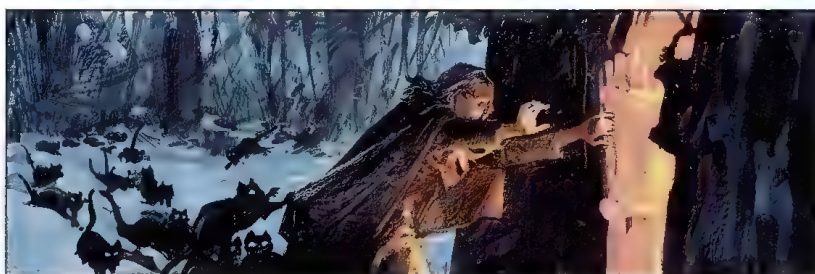
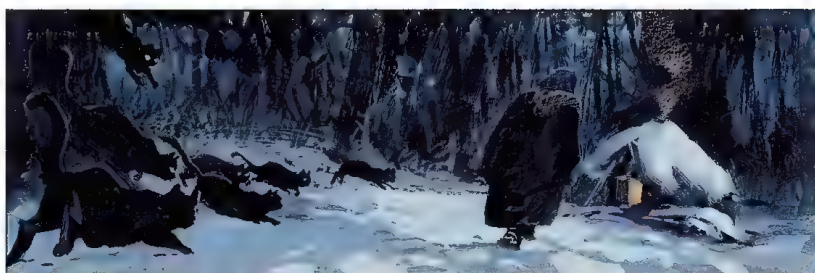


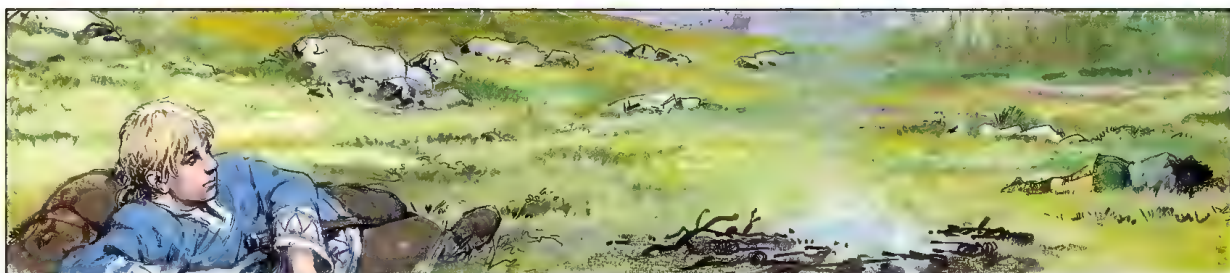
AND SINCE I'M NOT THE
ONLY ONE THINKING OF
STRATEGIC ALLIANCES
... IT'S HIGH TIME I GET
TO WORK.



NOT A WORD. GET UP
QUIETLY AND WALK WITHOUT
A SOUND IN THE DIRECTION
I TELL YOU.



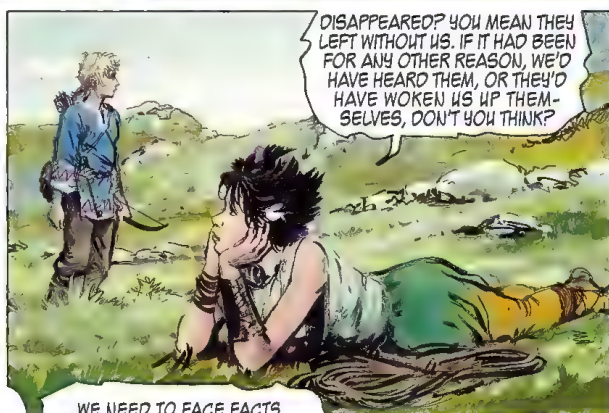
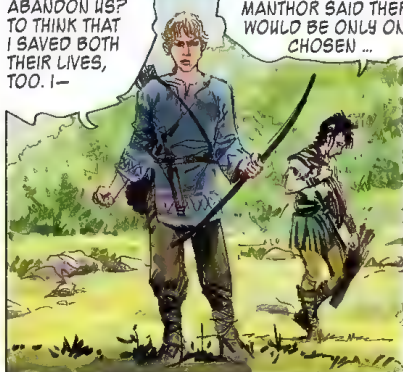




INGVILD! WAKE UP!
ARLAC AND DRAY HAVE
DISAPPEARED!

YOU ARE SO NAIVE!
REST ASSURED: THEY
WANT AN EXCEPTIONAL
DESTINY JUST AS MUCH
AS YOU DO. AND SINCE
MANTHOR SAID THERE
WOULD BE ONLY ONE
CHOSEN ...

HOW COULD THEY
ABANDON US?
TO THINK THAT
I SAVED BOTH
THEIR LIVES,
TOO. I—



DISAPPEARED? YOU MEAN THEY
LEFT WITHOUT US. IF IT HAD BEEN
FOR ANY OTHER REASON, WE'D
HAVE HEARD THEM, OR THEY'D
HAVE WOKEN US UP THEM-
SELVES, DON'T YOU THINK?

FIRST OF ALL,
THAT'S NOT EXACTLY
WHAT MANTHOR SAID.
SECOND, WE NEED—

WE NEED TO FACE FACTS.
OUR GUTLESS COMPANIONS HAVE
DESERTED US. WHICH I CONSIDER
A BLESSING IN DISGUISE,
ACTUALLY ... FOR, I KNOW YOU'RE
THE STRONGEST, JOLAN.

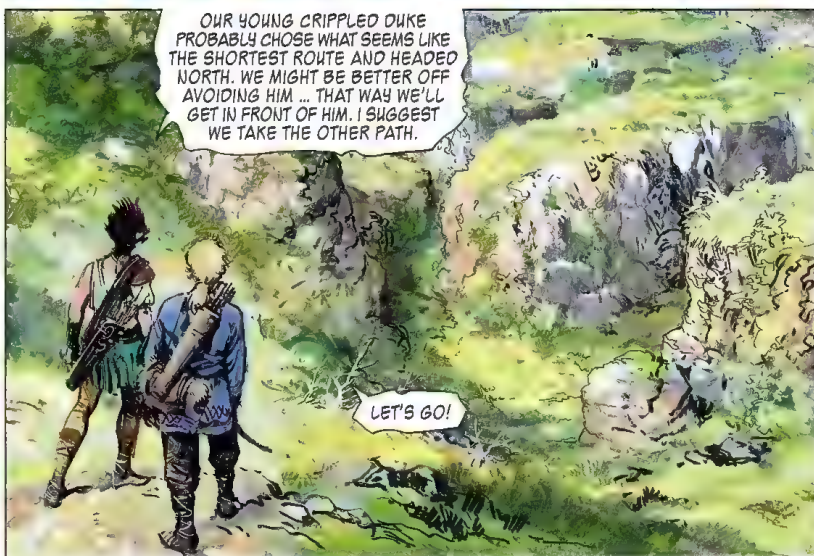
AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY,
THE SMARTEST. IF YOU STAY
BY MY SIDE, WE'LL REACH
MANTHOR'S CASTLE.
I KNOW IT.



THE
STRONG-
EST? ...

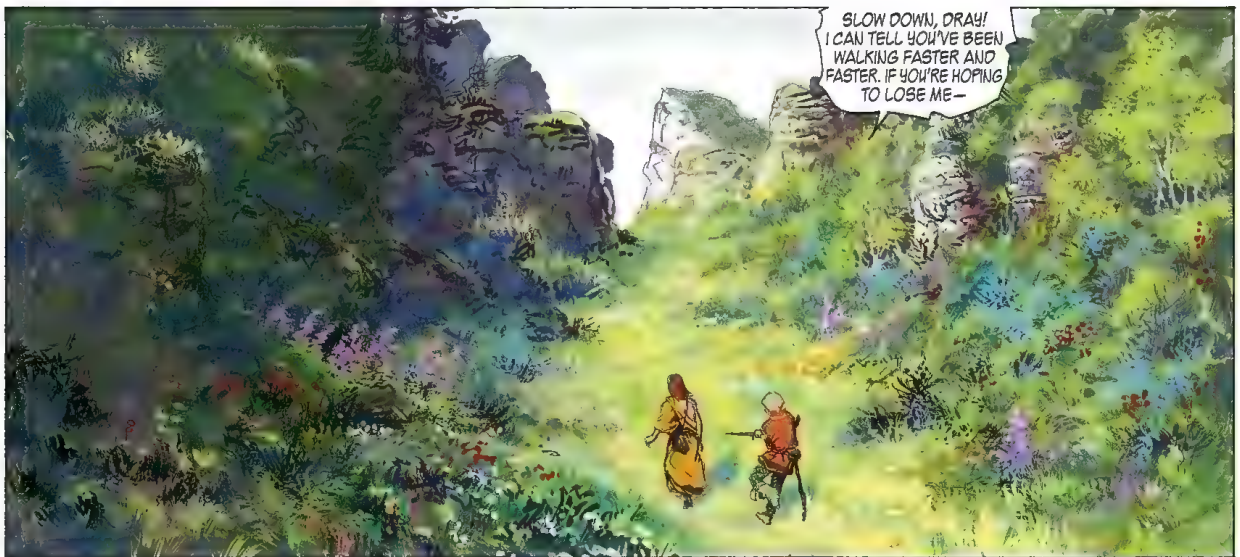


COME!



OUR YOUNG CRIPPLED DUKE
PROBABLY CHOSE WHAT SEEMS LIKE
THE SHORTEST ROUTE AND HEADED
NORTH. WE MIGHT BE BETTER OFF
AVOIDING HIM ... THAT WAY WE'LL
GET IN FRONT OF HIM. I SUGGEST
WE TAKE THE OTHER PATH.

LET'S GO!



SLOW DOWN, DRAY!
I CAN TELL YOU'VE BEEN
WALKING FASTER AND
FASTER. IF YOU'RE HOPING
TO LOSE ME—



AAAAH!



DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT, DRAY.
EVEN IF WE GO BACK, JOLAN
AND INGILD WILL BE GONE. IT
ONLY MAKES SENSE TO CONTINUE
TOGETHER ... AND MAKE THE
BEST OF OUR HEAD START.

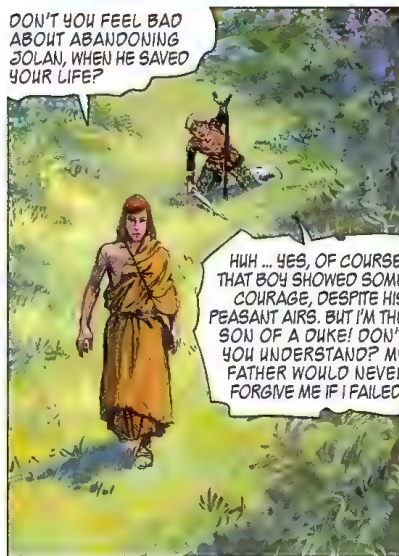


WHY DID
YOU DO
IT?

THINK ABOUT IT. I ... I CAN
ONLY WALK ON MY RIGHT
FOOT, AND YOU ONLY HAVE
YOUR LEFT. IT'S A SIGN THAT
WE'RE THE TWO CHOSEN
ONES WHOSE FEET CAN
TREAD THE THRESHOLD OF
INITIATION. REMEMBER?



THE SAD THING IS
THAT YOU PROBABLY
ACTED IN SUCH A
STUPID FASHION
BASED SOLELY ON
THIS PREMISE.



DON'T YOU FEEL BAD
ABOUT ABANDONING
JOLAN, WHEN HE SAVED
YOUR LIFE?

HUH ... YES, OF COURSE.
THAT BOY SHOWED SOME
COURAGE, DESPITE HIS
PEASANT AIRS. BUT I'M THE
SON OF A DUKE! DON'T
YOU UNDERSTAND? MY
FATHER WOULD NEVER
FORGIVE ME IF I FAILED!

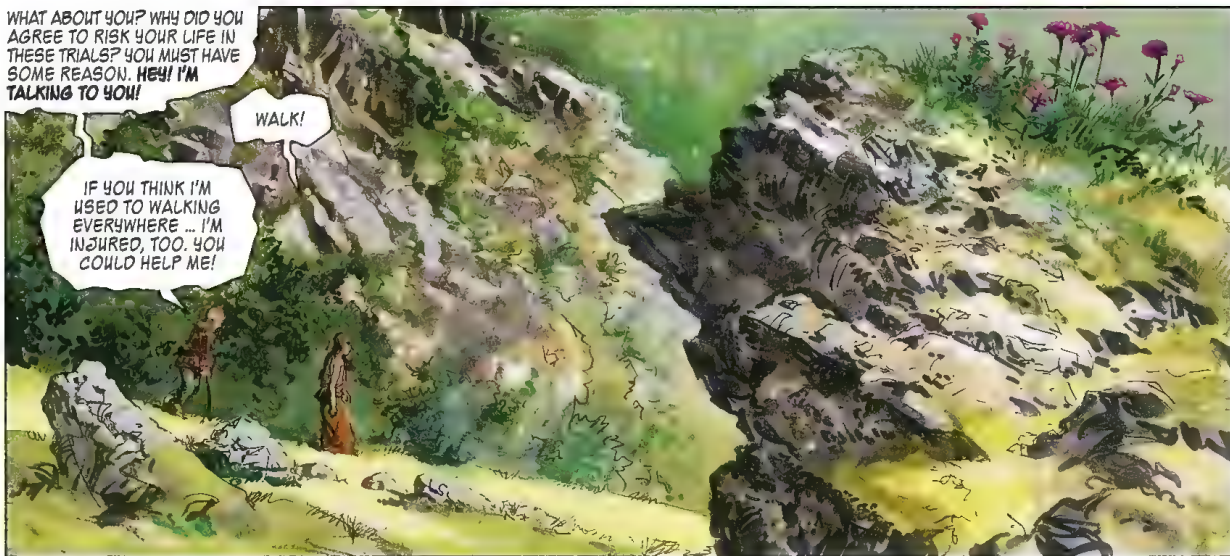


WHEN MANTHOR CAME TO HIM TO DISCUSS
HOW MY FATE COULD BE EXCEPTIONAL IF
I PROVED WORTHY OF IT, MY FATHER DIDN'T
GIVE ME A CHOICE. I HAVE TO SUCCEED IF
I EVER WANT TO INHERIT HIS DUCHY!

WHAT ABOUT YOU? WHY DID YOU AGREE TO RISK YOUR LIFE IN THESE TRIALS? YOU MUST HAVE SOME REASON. HEY! I'M TALKING TO YOU!

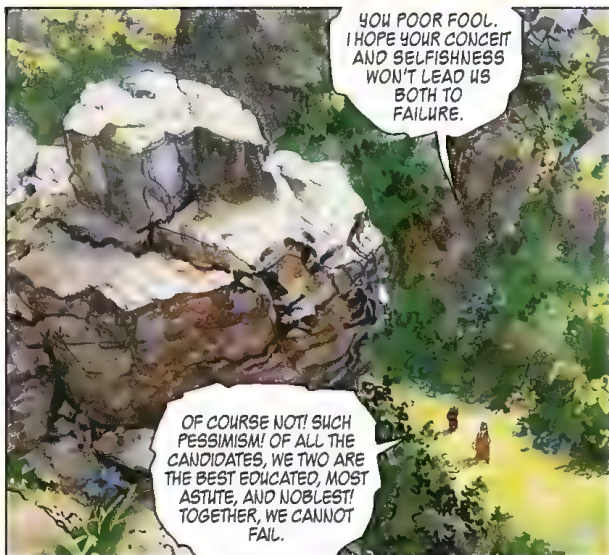
WALK!

IF YOU THINK I'M USED TO WALKING EVERYWHERE ... I'M INJURED, TOO. YOU COULD HELP ME!



YOU POOR FOOL. I HOPE YOUR CONCEIT AND SELFISHNESS WON'T LEAD US BOTH TO FAILURE.

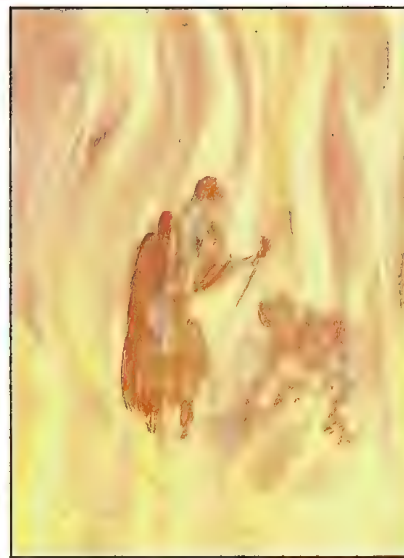
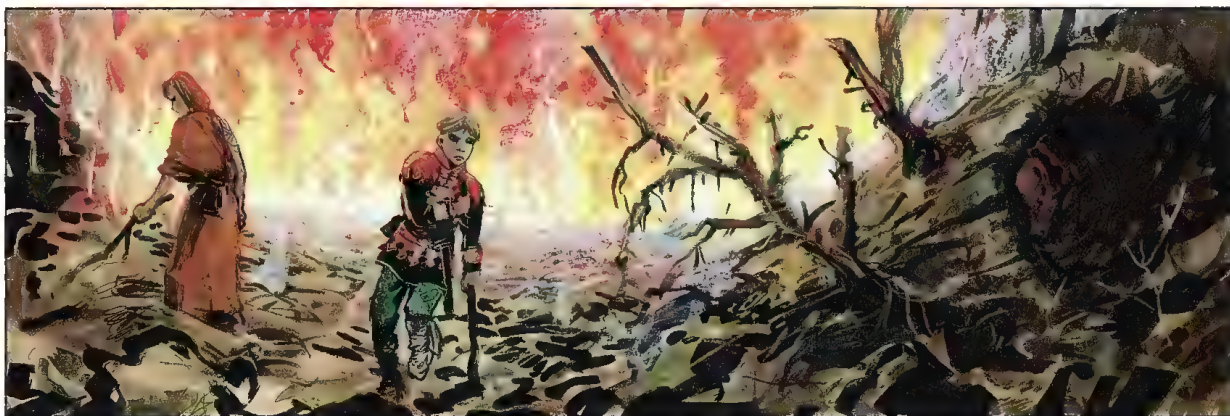
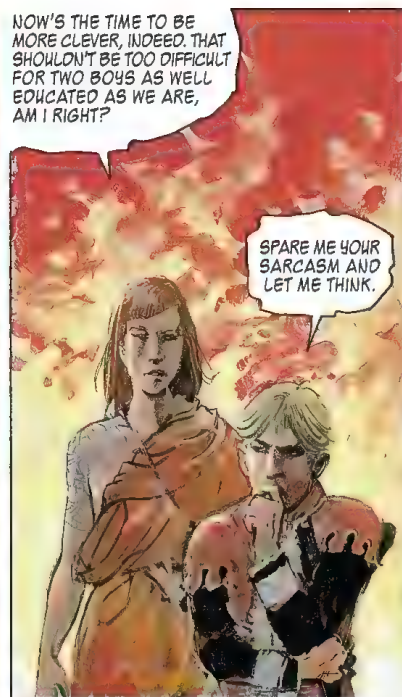
OF COURSE NOT! SUCH PESSIMISM! OF ALL THE CANDIDATES, WE TWO ARE THE BEST EDUCATED, MOST ASTUTE, AND NOBLEST! TOGETHER, WE CANNOT FAIL.



I HOPE SO ... THOUGH I THINK A COUPLE OF STALWART FRIENDS ON TOP OF OUR EDUCATIONS WOULD HELP TO DEFEAT THAT.









IT'S IN PLACE!



AND NOW, FORWARD, AS HARD AS WE CAN!

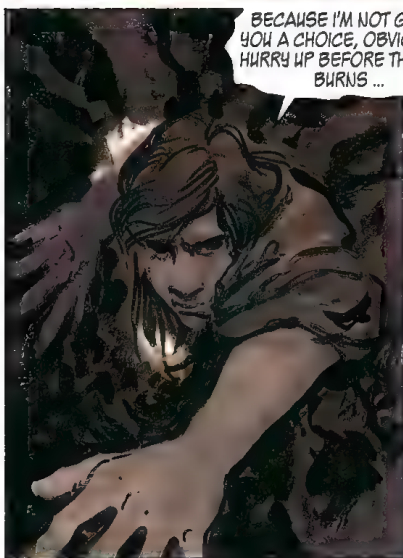


YAAAAHH!



PERFECT!
I'LL GO FIRST!

HEY! WHY SHOULD YOU—

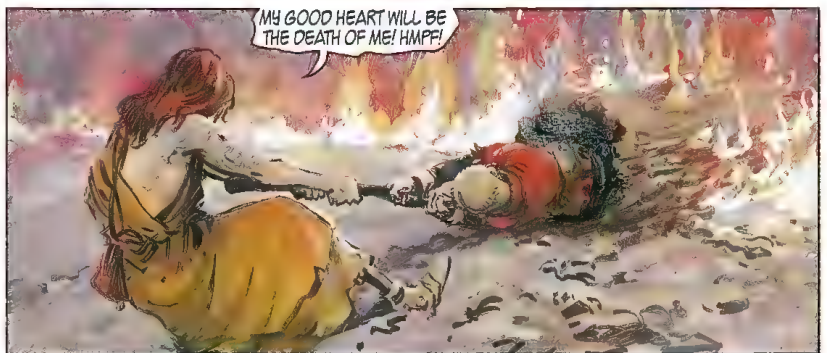
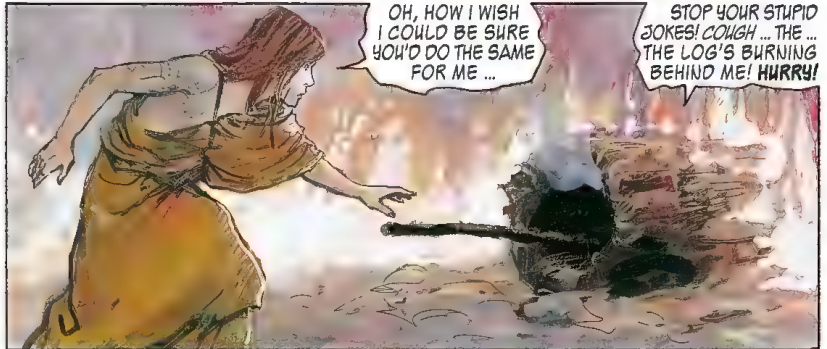
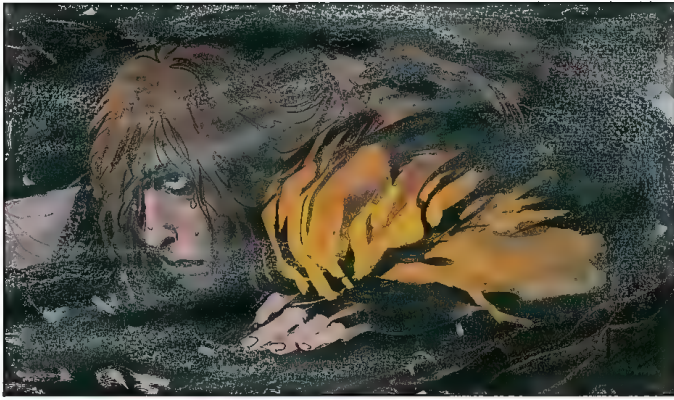


BECAUSE I'M NOT GIVING YOU A CHOICE, OBVIOUSLY! HURRY UP BEFORE THE LOG BURNS ...



UNBELIEVABLE!
WHAT A LITTLE ...









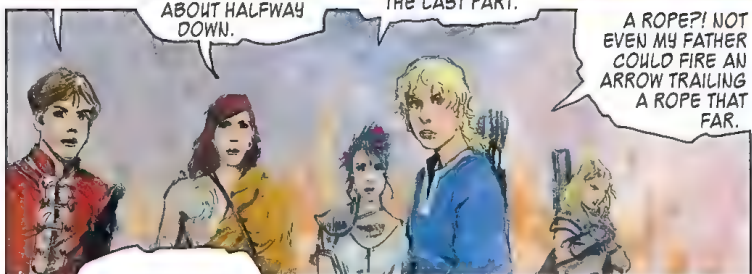
UNLESS ONE OF US CAN FLY, I SUGGEST WE ATTACH THE RAFT TO THE CABLES THAT HELD THE OLD BRIDGE AND SLIDE DOWN TO THE ENTRANCE.

THE SLOPE ISN'T STEEP ENOUGH. WE'LL STOP MOVING ABOUT HALFWAY DOWN.

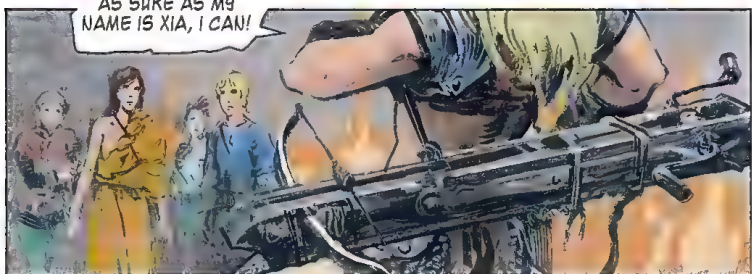
UNLESS WE MOOR A ROPE ON THE OTHER SIDE AND USE IT TO HAUL OURSELVES OVER THE LAST PART.

A ROPE?! NOT EVEN MY FATHER COULD FIRE AN ARROW TRAILING A ROPE THAT FAR.

THOUGH I ADMIT IT IS A VERY SPECIAL WEAPON THAT ALLOWS ME TO DO SO — ONE I HIGHLY DOUBT YOUR FATHER HAS.



AS SURE AS MY NAME IS XIA, I CAN!



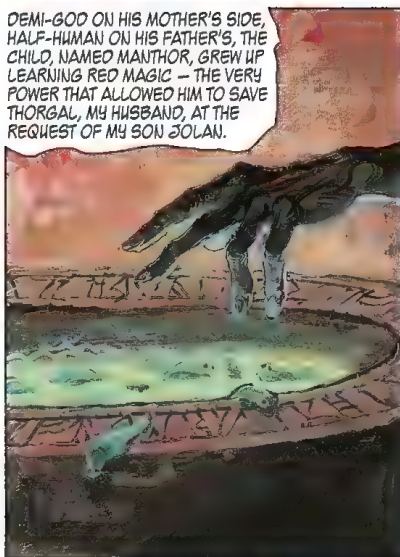
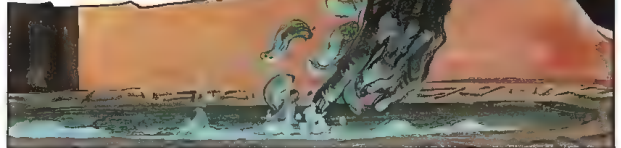


WHILE I PREPARE THE MIRROR OF TIME, TELL ME WHAT YOU ALREADY KNOW OF MANTHOR.



I LEARNED FROM A YOUNG GOD CALLED VIGRID THAT MANTHOR IS THE FRUIT OF THE UNION BETWEEN VILNHA, A YOUNG GODDESS FROM ASGARD, AND A MORTAL WITH WHOM SHE'D FALLEN MADLY IN LOVE.

ODIN, APPARENTLY FURIOUS AT THE UNION, SMOTE THE FATHER AND BANISHED THE MOTHER AND HER CHILD FROM ASGARD, UPON WHICH THEY SOUGHT REFUGE IN THE BETWIXT.



DEMI-GOD ON HIS MOTHER'S SIDE, HALF-HUMAN ON HIS FATHER'S, THE CHILD, NAMED MANTHOR, GREW UP LEARNING RED MAGIC — THE VERY POWER THAT ALLOWED HIM TO SAVE THORGAL, MY HUSBAND, AT THE REQUEST OF MY SON JOLAN.



AND IT WAS IN EXCHANGE FOR THAT HEALING THAT MANTHOR DEMANDED YOUR SON JOIN HIM, IS THAT IT?

YES, AND I'M WORRIED HE'S IN GREAT DANGER.



I DON'T KNOW IF YOUR SON IS IN DANGER, AARICIA, BUT I KNOW MANTHOR DIDN'T TAKE HIM IN HAND WITHOUT A SPECIFIC GOAL IN MIND. THE QUESTION IS WHETHER THE GOAL WILL PLACE JOLAN'S LIFE IN JEOPARDY ...

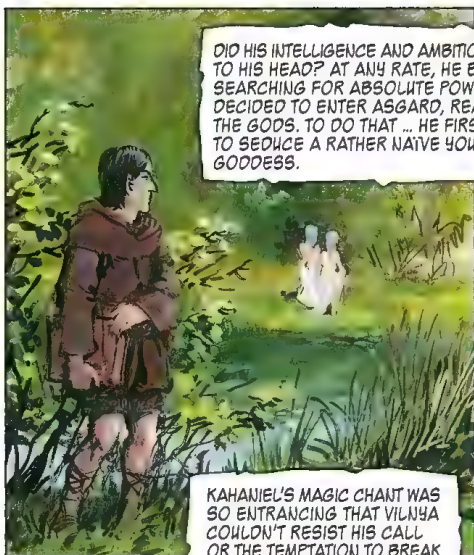


COME AND SIT BY MY SIDE. THE MIRROR OF TIME IS READY, AND IT WILL SHOW YOU THE TRUE ORIGINS OF MANTHOR. YOUNG VIGRID DIDN'T TELL YOU EVERYTHING ... FOR HE PROBABLY DOESN'T KNOW THE WHOLE TRUTH HIMSELF.

FIRST, YOU SHOULD KNOW THAT MANTHOR'S FATHER WAS AN EXTRAORDINARY MAN. HIS NAME WAS KAHANIEL, AND HE WAS THE UNDISPUTED MASTER OF THE BROTHERHOOD OF RED MAGIC. IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO ...



KAHANIEL WAS THE MOST GIFTED AMONG US. NO ONE WOULD HAVE DARED CHALLENGE HIS AUTHORITY. BESIDES, NO ONE COULD HAVE STOOD AGAINST HIS POWERS.

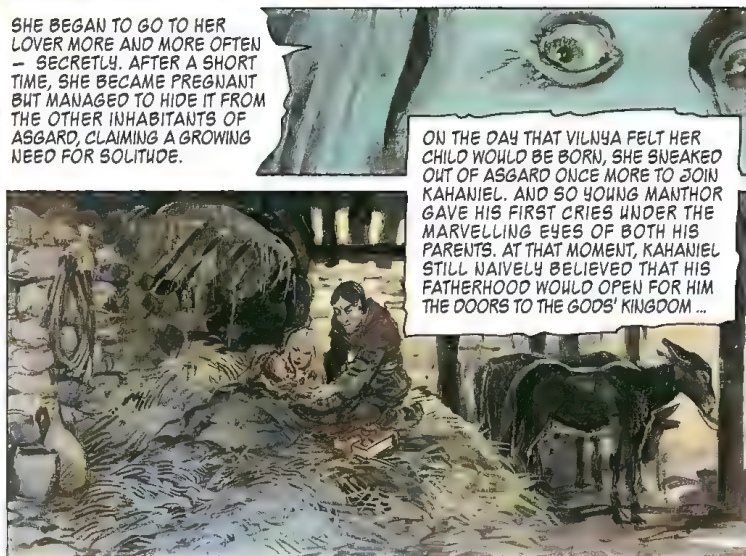


DID HIS INTELLIGENCE AND AMBITION GO TO HIS HEAD? AT ANY RATE, HE BEGAN SEARCHING FOR ABSOLUTE POWER. HE DECIDED TO ENTER ASGARD, REALM OF THE GODS. TO DO THAT ... HE FIRST HAD TO SEDUCE A RATHER NAIVE YOUNG GODDESS.

KAHANIEL'S MAGIC CHANT WAS SO ENTRANING THAT VILNYA COULDN'T RESIST HIS CALL OR THE TEMPTATION TO BREAK ONE OF ASGARD'S MOST SACRED LAWS: NEVER FALL IN LOVE WITH A HUMAN.

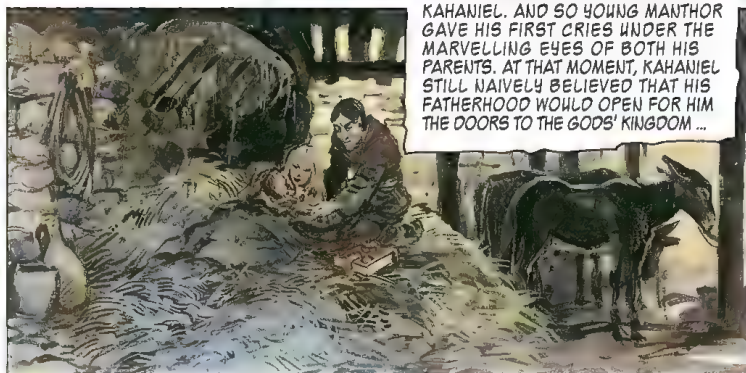


THE ONE HE HAD SET HIS SIGHTS ON WAS CALLED VILNYA. SHE WOULD OFTEN WANDER TO THE LAKE NEAR THE BORDER WITH MIDGARD. YOUNG GODDESSES ARE SUPPOSED TO WEAR A SCARF THAT PREVENTS THEM FROM HEARING HUMANS CALL THEM ... BUT THIS ONE LOVED HER REFLECTION IN THE WATERS OF THE LAKE TOO MUCH.



SHE BEGAN TO GO TO HER LOVER MORE AND MORE OFTEN — SECRETLY. AFTER A SHORT TIME, SHE BECAME PREGNANT BUT MANAGED TO HIDE IT FROM THE OTHER INHABITANTS OF ASGARD, CLAIMING A GROWING NEED FOR SOLITUDE.

ON THE DAY THAT VILNYA FELT HER CHILD WOULD BE BORN, SHE SNEAKED OUT OF ASGARD ONCE MORE TO JOIN KAHANIEL. AND SO YOUNG MANTHOR GAVE HIS FIRST CRIES UNDER THE MARVELLING EYES OF BOTH HIS PARENTS. AT THAT MOMENT, KAHANIEL STILL NAIVELY BELIEVED THAT HIS FATHERHOOD WOULD OPEN FOR HIM THE DOORS TO THE GODS' KINGDOM ...



BUT THE CRIES OF THE CHILD WERE SO POWERFUL THAT THEY CAUGHT THE ATTENTION OF ODIN HIMSELF. DISCOVERING THAT THE LAW OF ASGARD HAD BEEN FLOUTED, HE SMOTE THE IMPUDENT HUMAN ON THE SPOT AND ENTOMBED HIM IN A PRISON OF ICE COVERING HIS BODY.



TO DISCOURAGE ANY OTHER HUMANS FROM DEFYING THE LAWS OF ASGARD, THE ALLFATHER LEFT KAHANIEL ON THE MIDGARD BORDER, HIS BACK FOREVER TURNED TO THE REALM HE HAD DESIRED SO MUCH.



ODIN CRUELLY ADDED ...

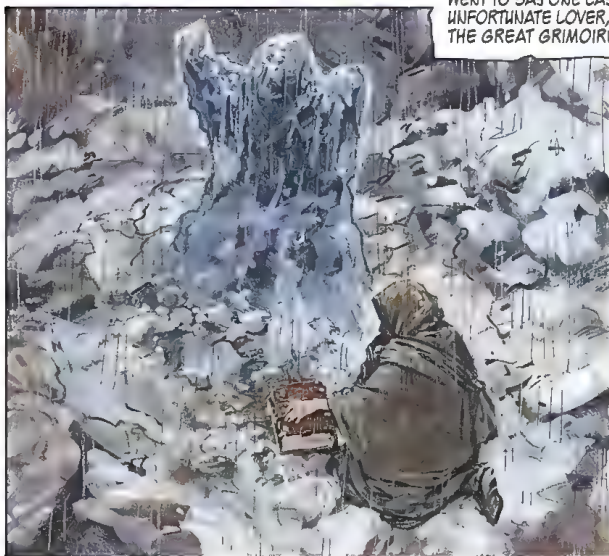
AND KNOW, YOU FOOL, THAT SHOULD YOU ONE DAY BREAK FREE OF YOUR ICE CASKET, YOUR LIFE WILL END ON THE SAME DAY!



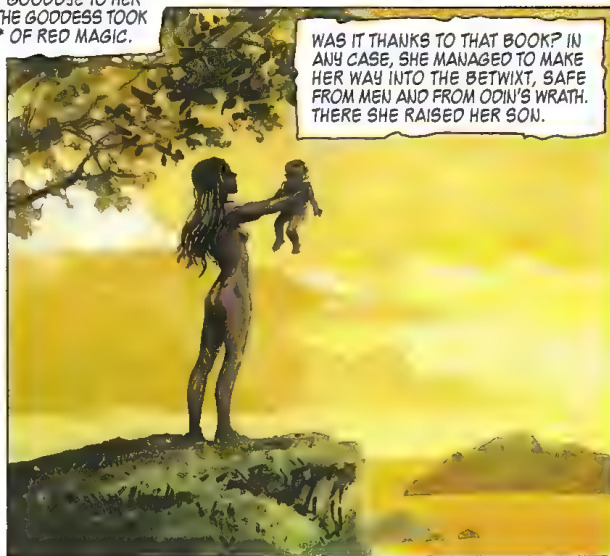
VILNYA, TOO, WAS PUNISHED. WANTING TO MAKE AN EXAMPLE OF THE YOUNG GODDESS, ODIN STRIPPED HER OF HER IMMORTALITY AND SENTENCED HER TO EXILE ALONG WITH HER NEWBORN CHILD.



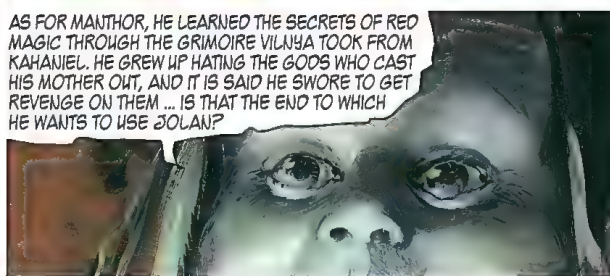
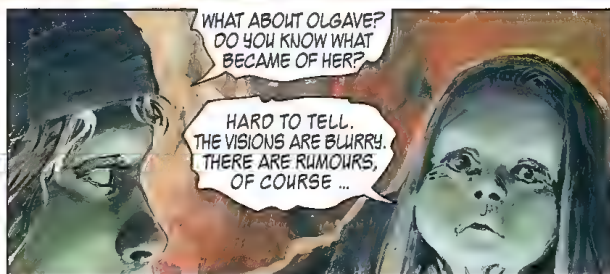
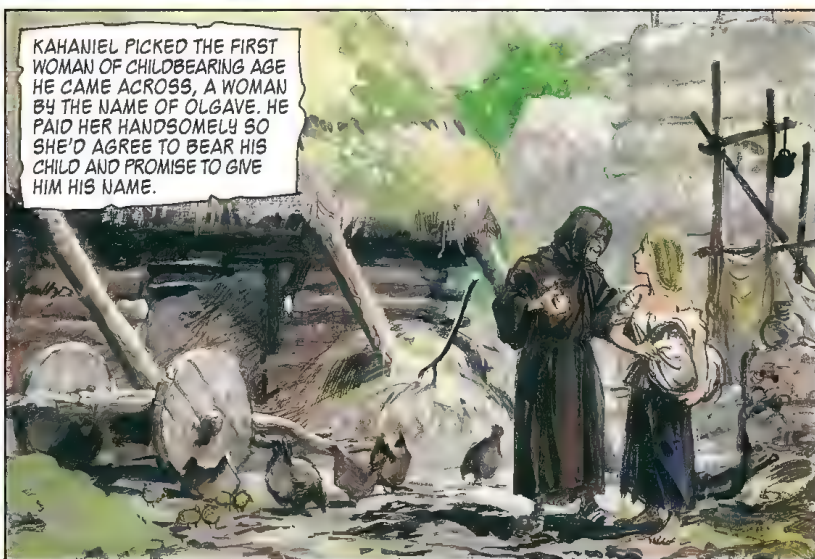
FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON, AS SHE WENT TO SAY ONE LAST GOODBYE TO HER UNFORTUNATE LOVER, THE GODDESS TOOK THE GREAT GRIMOIRE* OF RED MAGIC.



WAS IT THANKS TO THAT BOOK? IN ANY CASE, SHE MANAGED TO MAKE HER WAY INTO THE BETWIXT, SAFE FROM MEN AND FROM ODIN'S WRATH. THERE SHE RAISED HER SON.

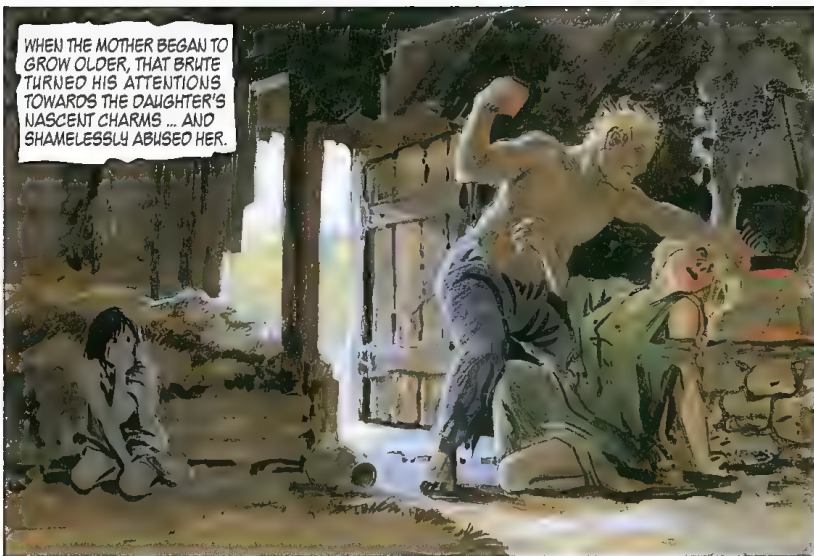


*A BOOK OF MAGIC SPELLS AND INVOCATIONS.





WE HEARD THAT OLGAVE GAVE BIRTH TO A DAUGHTER. AFTER QUICKLY SPENDING THE MONEY KAHANIEL HAD GIVEN HER, SHE SET UP HOUSEKEEPING WITH ANOTHER MAN - A VIOLENT LOU.



WHEN THE MOTHER BEGAN TO GROW OLDER, THAT BRUTE TURNED HIS ATTENTIONS TOWARDS THE DAUGHTER'S NASCENT CHARMS ... AND SHAMELESSLY ABUSED HER.



THE LITTLE GIRL HAD REACHED THE AGE OF 12 BY THE TIME HER MOTHER DIED AND COULDN'T TAKE IT ANY MORE. SHE STUCK A KNIFE IN HER ABUSER'S THROAT AND RAN AWAY FROM HER VILLAGE FOR GOOD. NO ONE EVER HEARD FROM HER AGAIN. NOR WERE ANY MEMBERS OF THE BROTHERHOOD ABLE TO FIND ANY TRACE OF HER.

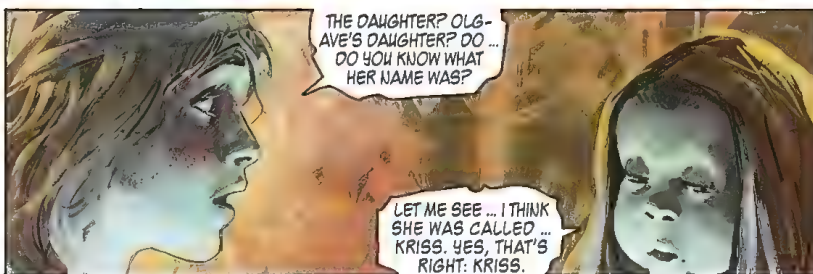


IF THAT GIRL SURVIVED AND HAD A MALE CHILD OF HER OWN, PERHAPS KAHANIEL OF VALNOR IS BEING REBORN SOMEWHERE, WAITING UNTIL HE REACHES 10 TO SUMMON THE MEMBERS OF HIS BROTHERHOOD? ...



WH ... WHAT DID YOU SAY? WHAT DID YOU CALL THIS KAHANIEL?

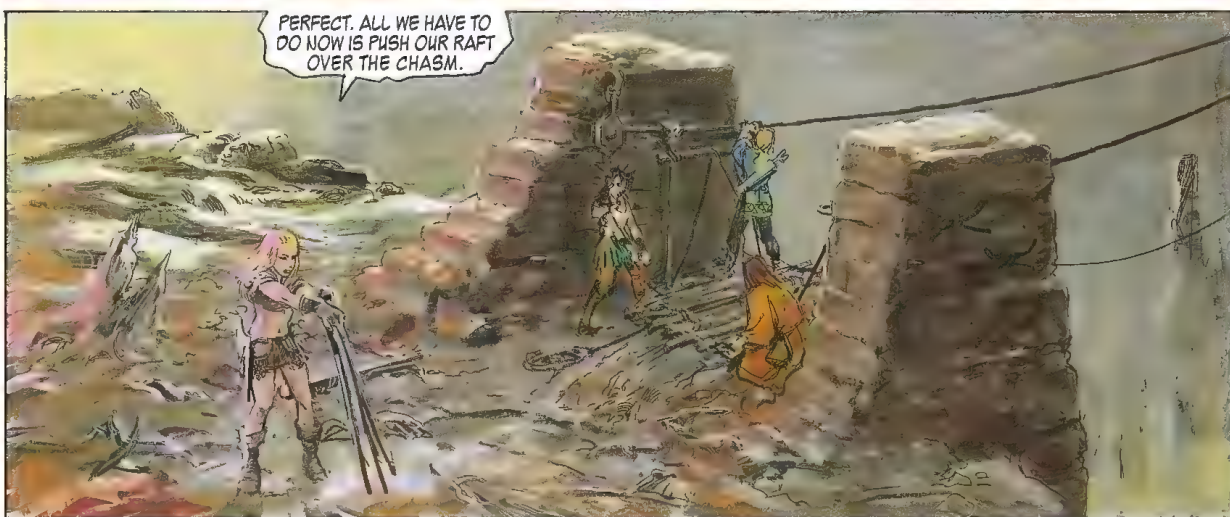
KAHANIEL OF VALNOR. WHY? DO YOU KNOW THE NAME?



THE DAUGHTER? OLGAVE'S DAUGHTER? DO ... DO YOU KNOW WHAT HER NAME WAS?

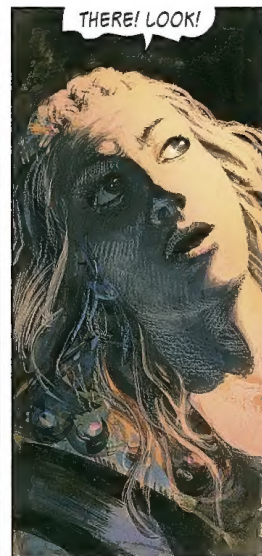
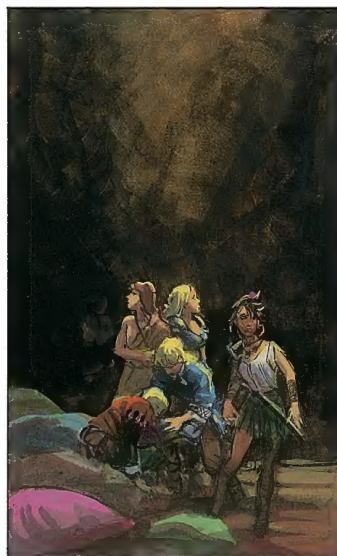
LET ME SEE ... I THINK SHE WAS CALLED ... KRISS. YES, THAT'S RIGHT: KRISS.











HOWEVER, THE PATH THAT STRETCHES BEFORE YOU WILL BE FAR MORE DIFFICULT THAN WHAT YOU HAVE EXPERIENCED. ENJOY THE FEAST YOU WILL NOW BE SERVED, FOR TOMORROW AT DAWN THE INITIATION BEGINS.



